

Middle School overview

East Campus





We offer a robust and challenging programme for students aged 11 to 14 (Grades 6-8), connecting academic subjects with social development and opportunities for leadership.

Our Middle School learning programme is structured to meet the varied intellectual and developmental needs of adolescents as they prepare for High School. The five elements of our programme include an academically rigorous curriculum, a personal and social education (PSE) programme addressing the needs of young adolescents, challenging expeditions through our extensive outdoor education programme and involvement in the wider life of the College and in the Singapore community through extensive opportunities to be involved in the activities and service programmes.

We encourage students to apply themselves fully in all that they do and offer guidance and support in a positive and caring environment. Our teachers act as role models for students, providing more than the academic programme by offering guidance in lunchtime and after-school activities, supporting service initiatives and participating in the outdoor education programme with their students.

Our educational programme promotes international understanding, while making education relevant to the global needs of our time. We celebrate the variety of cultures at UWCSEA and encourage our community to explore and understand the traditions and backgrounds of others. Our PSE and mentor programmes provide transitional support for new students as they join the College and our community.

Our goal is to develop students who have the ability to lead effectively when the need arises but who can also adapt to various roles within a team to promote the successful completion of a project, activity or service task. The learning programme provides structured opportunities for students to develop these skills in a wide variety of settings.

At all levels of the school, we provide exceptional opportunity for our students to develop independence and leadership skills, and the Middle School is no exception. At the heart of our educational philosophy is the belief that we prepare students not just for university, but for life, and it is the skills and qualities students develop, as much as the knowledge and understanding they gain, that will define the quality of the life they live. For this reason, students are encouraged to extend themselves so that they experience failure as well as success, to understand that leadership can take many forms, to develop their critical thinking and communication skills and to grow in the belief that they can play a positive role in society.

Middle School enrolment

Grade	Age of students*	Number of students	Number of classes
6	11–12 years	198	9
7	12–13 years	198	9
8	13–14 years	198	9
Total		594	27

* Students must be born on or between 1 September and 31 August. Refer to the age-grade boundary chart on our website for guidance, or contact Admissions.

An additional 22 new places are created in Grade 6 each year as the grade-level cohort expands. In Grades 7 and 8 the availability of places relies on students withdrawing from the College as no new class sets are created.

Available places are offered up to the start of Term 2 (January) of the academic year.

About the UWCSEA curriculum

Developed from our mission, the concept-based curriculum at UWCSEA enables students to embrace challenge and take responsibility for shaping a better world. This is achieved through all five elements of our holistic learning programme—academics, activities, outdoor education, personal and social education and service.

Our concept-based curriculum organises learning around the development of transferable ideas, which may be disciplinary or interdisciplinary. Knowledge and skill acquisition is vital, but not the end goal in a concept-based curriculum. Using their knowledge and skill learning, students construct and express conceptual understandings, which transfer to new contexts. This allows our students to apply critical thought in any situation, now or in the future.

The curriculum model also takes into account the reality of our international school community. Students who spend only a few of their overall schooling at the College, due to the relocation of their family, are equipped by our focus on transferable concepts rather than specific content. This ensures a smooth transition from one school system to another, if a family must leave the College.

Standards: Standards are the significant concepts from each learning area, articulated into 'conceptual statements'. These apply to all grade levels from K1 to the IB Diploma Programme (IBDP). This ensures that these concepts are revisited in developmentally appropriate ways as students transition from grade to grade. Because the standards are conceptual in nature, students who join us from different countries can transfer access the curriculum regardless of their educational background.

Conceptual Understandings: Under each standard are conceptual understandings, which are conceptual statements written for specific developmental stages. These may be grade-specific. This allows students to access the broader concepts in the standard, while simultaneously developing an understanding of specific concepts appropriate to the grade-level.

Benchmarks: Benchmarks are attached to each conceptual understanding in each grade. These describe what a student should know or be able to do at each stage of their learning in order to develop understanding in each subject.

In the High School, the standards, conceptual understandings and benchmarks specifically take into account the requirements of the external examining bodies that set the (I)GCSE and IBDP examinations that students sit at the end of these two-year courses in Grade 10 and Grade 12.

How the model works

Using English as an example, all students work towards a standard in writing for an audience. The conceptual understandings in each grade then outline what students should understand at each stage—in early Primary School this is a conceptual understanding around making deliberate word choices in their communication. By Middle School the complexity of the conceptual understanding has developed and students are asked to create pleasure and coherent meaning through their choice of words. This in turn is further refined in the High School as students in the IB Diploma Programme (IBDP) are asked to influence the reader through selective word choice.

Below is an example of a standard in English, and the conceptual understandings for that standard in Grades 1 and 7 and the IBDP.

K1–Grade 12

Standard: Writing expresses selfhood, creativity and intellect in a medium shaped by audience and purpose.

Grade 1

Conceptual Understanding: We create real or imagined experiences when writing stories by using characters and setting.

Benchmark: Develop the story through character, focusing on specific actions.

Grade 7

Conceptual Understanding: All parts of a text work together to shape meaning.

Benchmark: Write narratives, using time and plot deliberately in order to influence mood and focus attention on the important moments in a story.

Grade 11 and 12 (IBDP)

Conceptual Understanding: Writers manipulate structure to convey meaning effectively.

Benchmark: Sequence and sustain structure to strengthen and develop the logic and persuasive impact of a claim.



Academics

Students have a broad and balanced range of subjects, including the core subjects of English, Humanities, Mathematics and Science. In addition, courses in the Arts, Languages, Physical Education and other exploratory subjects in areas such as Design and Technology ensure that students are able to develop across a range of subjects.

The Middle School programme intentionally refines core interdisciplinary skills initiated in many inquiry-based Primary School curricula. Students have subject specialist teachers—who specialise in teaching Middle School age students—guiding them in fundamental subject-specific skills required for higher studies.

Middle School subject offerings (refer to the curriculum guide on our website for detailed information)		Number of periods per week		
		Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Grade 6: English and Humanities (Geography and History)*		10	-	-
Grades 7 and 8: English		-	5	5
Grades 7 and 8: Humanities (Geography and History)		-	5	5
Language other than English or Extra EAL or Study Skills	First Language	Chinese		
	Beginner Languages	Chinese (G6); French (G6, G7); Spanish (G6, G8)	5	5
	Foreign Languages	Chinese; EAL; French; Spanish		
Mathematics		5	5	5
Science		5	5	5
Physical Education		4	4	4
Drama/Visual Arts**		4	4	4
Design and Technology		2	2	2
Music		2	2	2
Food and Nutrition/Social and Environmental Entrepreneurship (SEED)**		2	2	2
Life Skills		1	1	1
Total		40	40	40

*In Grade 6, our curriculum integrates English with the study of Humanities, where the English skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening are woven into the study of Geography and History, in addition to the study of literature texts in their own right.

**Students spend half a year on each subject each academic year.

Languages other than English/English as an Additional Language

Students elect one Language other than English as part of their timetabled lessons unless they are taking EAL.

Some home language (mother tongue) classes are taught after school in small groups at additional cost. These classes are available subject to demand. See our Languages factsheet for more information or contact Admissions.

Social and Environmental Entrepreneurship (SEED)

This course empowers students to contribute to a peaceful and sustainable future by providing them with an understanding of sustainability, systems thinking, and a change-making process through entrepreneurship. This three-year course allows students to extend their understanding of the world both in a global and local context, while developing the skills and qualities of the UWCSEA profile with a particular focus on commitment to care.

Activities

Our comprehensive activities programme presents our students with opportunities to try new things, discover new talents and further develop their passions, as well as make new friends through the sharing of common interests.

The diverse variety of activities includes competitive and recreational sports, music, art in many forms, dance, drama, leadership and curriculum-based or enrichment activities. The programme is offered in four 'seasons' each year, allowing students to try a number of new activities throughout the school year. Students who take the bus home are provided with an 'activity bus' after activities have concluded at no additional cost.

Dragons Sports and Wellness for Life

We enter teams in all sports offered by the Athletic Conference of Singapore International Schools (ACSIS) as well as a number of other competitions in Singapore and the region. The representative sports available to Middle School students include: athletics, badminton, basketball, cricket (boys), cross country, football, gymnastics, netball (girls), rugby (boys), sailing, softball, swimming, tennis, touch rugby (girls) and volleyball.

A number of additional recreational sports, such as golf, martial arts, rock climbing and ultimate (frisbee), are offered for students who want to participate but perhaps not compete.

Arts and Performance

The East Campus ensemble programme offers many different opportunities for specialist and non-specialist Middle School musicians, including the Middle School Chamber Ensemble, Jazz Band and Orchestra, the Caribe Samba Band, Karibu Marimba Express and Vocal Project. The Middle School ensembles perform in two featured concerts during the year.

The Instrumental Teaching Programme offers access to individual and small group vocal and music lessons on a number of instruments at an additional cost. Instrument hire is available.

Performance opportunities are offered as part of the activities programme, and Middle School students are invited to audition for two drama productions during the year, which are supported by our Drama and Theatre Teachers. In addition, students have the opportunity to perform in the Elements Dance Showcase featuring genres such as Contemporary, Hip Hop, Jazz, Rock and Roll and Asian dance forms.

Students also have with many opportunities to develop interests in specialisations such as ceramics or photography in visual arts as part of the activities programme.

Learn and Lead, Mind Matters, Create and Innovate

Students have ample opportunity to develop leadership skills through participation in groups such as MS Student Leadership (Student Council), Model United Nations, the Service Executive Committee, Techxperts and the organising committee for the TECHLife student-led conference. Other leadership activities are available including coaching younger sports teams or working with Primary School students.

The offerings of clubs and special interests are varied and have included activities such as aerial gymnastics, chess, engineering, masterchef, yearbook and production of a literary magazine. These options are intended to give students the opportunity to extend their interests beyond the classroom.





Outdoor Education

Our challenging and fun outdoor education programme provides invaluable learning experiences for all our students. A series of activities and expeditions are planned, managed and led by our experienced Outdoor Education staff.

An important component of the programme is the idea of 'team challenge' activities, in which students are given challenges to overcome as a group. Developing a sense of the individual's own responsibility to this group effort is a very important aim of the Outdoor Education programme.

Teaching staff and mentors accompany the students on their grade-level expeditions, together with our Outdoor Education trip leaders. The Middle School expeditions are as follows:

- **Grade 6** go on a five-day multi-activity expedition to Pulau Tioman in Malaysia
- **Grade 7** complete a one-star kayak training certificate in Singapore before travelling to Pulau Sibu in Malaysia for a five-day kayaking trip
- **Grade 8** students spend two weeks in Chiang Mai, Thailand; one week undertaking adventure activities such as white-water rafting and hiking, and the other completing curriculum-based field activities

All students are expected to participate in these activities and expeditions, which are at an additional cost.

Optional trips

Middle School students have the opportunity to participate in optional trips that are linked to a number of elements in the learning programme during school holidays. These trips are grouped under the categories of:

- **adventure trips**, such as the annual New Zealand, Southern Africa or Japan (skiing) trips
- **service trips** to Cambodia, Indonesia, India, Kenya, Malaysia, Nepal and Vietnam; many of these are family trips where students and parents travel with UWCSEA staff to visit our NGO partners in these countries
- **curriculum enrichment**, such as trips to China, Taiwan, France or Spain for students of Chinese, French or Spanish language

There are also opportunities through the Global Issues Network for students to attend student-led conferences in the region that are focused on sustainable development and leadership.

Personal and Social Education

For Middle School students, this is a time of significant change in their intellectual, social and emotional development. It is a time of transition as students seek increased levels of independence and responsibility. Our dedicated personal and social education (PSE) programme provides a supportive, safe and nurturing environment that recognises the unique developmental needs of Middle School students and addresses them through a programme that is relevant, challenging, integrative and exploratory.

Our Middle School PSE team is led by the Vice Principal of Pastoral Care and Heads of Grade. The Head of Grade for each year level works with mentors, who are responsible for the overall welfare of their students with an overview of both academic progress and social and emotional needs. The Heads of Grade rotate through each grade with their cohort to optimise support and provide continuity for students (and parents).

All students are placed in a mentor group at the start of each academic year. Mentors meet with their mentor group for three 20-minute and two 40-minute sessions per week. This includes a weekly grade-level assembly where topics current in the PSE programme are further explored. All students also participate in a bi-weekly Life Skills class to further explore self-awareness, relationships, community and financial literacy. Other ways in which students are supported by the PSE programme include guest speakers, special presentations and focus weeks around particular topics and themes.

Our PSE programme provides students with strategies for effective learning such as organisation, self-management and reflection skills. The mentor assists students in developing routines and healthy habits. Grade 8 mentors also support students as they prepare for High School, particularly with guidance in the subject selection process.

Professional guidance from the Middle School counsellor is also available for students and families.

Technology

Appropriate use technology is integrated into each classroom as a tool to facilitate learning. All students have a laptop equipped with College-supplied software, and access to on-campus helpdesk support.

Students are supported in the responsible use of technology through our PSE programme. This provides them with the skills and knowledge to become responsible, independent and organised digital citizens.

Teachers and mentors are supported by a digital literacy coach and a network of technology mentors in implementing effective uses of technology in teaching and learning.

A series of workshops for parents ensure that good habits around technology are reinforced at home and parents are equipped to help students navigate the online world.

We use Generation Safe tools to provide our teachers with professional development in the areas of prevention, detection, intervention and response to cyber incidents.



Service

Service is an essential component of the UWCSEA learning programme and is at the heart of our ethos. Our service programme provides opportunities for students to develop compassion and address the UN Sustainable Development goals. In service, students take practical steps to help create a more caring society and conserve the environment.

Service requires whole-hearted commitment, where students learn the importance of approaching every service activity and commitment with energy, and a willingness to try new things, to reflect on successes and failures and to always focus on the larger goal of shaping a better world.

College and Local Service

Middle School service is organised into grade-level families of service learning experiences, which are developmentally appropriate. Grade 6 focused on Action for the Planet, Grade 7 involves Action for People and Grade 8 participates in Action for Peace and Prosperity. All students are required to participate in College or local service. Service activities vary widely but include:

- rainforest restoration
- paired reading with children from local primary schools
- chat and games with elderly Singaporeans
- gardening projects to enhance the environment on campus
- upcycling and recycling project
- musical buddies with a local Cerebral Palsy Centre

Some local services are shared with the High School, whose students act as mentors for the Middle School students. In other services, our Middle School students take the lead as mentors for Junior School students.

Global Concerns

All Middle School students are encouraged to join one of several Global Concerns (GC) groups that have links with grassroots NGOs in the region and further afield. These groups meet weekly at lunchtimes and provide an opportunity for students to both learn about and to take action to support their chosen GC. Students who elect to undertake a GC rather than College or Local Service are asked to sign up for a full year, so that they can gain an in-depth understanding of the issues facing their chosen GC.

There are also a number of optional service trips open to students (and in some cases families) which provide unparalleled opportunities for participants to further their understanding of the challenges faced by these groups and to take action to support their chosen 'cause' - refer to the Optional Trips section on page 6.

For more information, please contact Admissions

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